

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4, 16 and 18 have been amended, and claims 24 and 25 have been added. Claims 8-15 and 21-23 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, claims 1-7, 16-20, 24 and 25 will be pending in the application after entry of the foregoing claim amendments. Support for the amendments is found in the specification, drawings, and claims as originally filed.

Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added.

Interview Summary

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the time and attention afforded by Examiner Anderson and Examiner Boyce during a telephonic interview on October 2, 2008. During the interview, Applicants' representatives, Examiner Anderson and Examiner Boyce discussed the claims and the non-anticipatory and non-obvious nature of the claims in view of the references cited in the Office Action. Applicants' representatives proposed amending the claims to further distinguish the claims from the references. Examiner Anderson and Examiner Boyce agreed to reconsider the application in view of the proposed amendments. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims as discussed during the interview.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C § 101

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Without conceding the merits of the rejection, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to recite that "the plurality of business rules are applied using a rules engine integrated with a workflow processor."

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-7 are directed to statutory subject matter. Applicants respectfully request, therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C § 112

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 112, paragraph 2, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants

regard as the invention. In an effort to facilitate prosecution, Applicants have amended the claims to further clarify the claimed subject matter.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-7 are not indefinite. Applicants respectfully request, therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, paragraph 2.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1-5, 7 and 16-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0195762 (hereinafter “Gleason”). Although Applicants believe that the present claims patentably define over Gleason, Applicants have amended the claims to further clarify the claimed subject matter.

The cited portions of Gleason fail to disclose or suggest the specific combination of claim 1. For example, the cited portions of Gleason fail to disclose or suggest applying a plurality of business rules to the workflow at the nodes to affect the operations. The plurality of business rules are applied using a rules engine integrated with a workflow processor. The rules engine and the workflow processor are implemented in the same processor.

More specifically, Gleason is directed to a method for building a business process in which data sources and participants for a business process are identified and input and output forms for the business process are integrated. A decision-tree based map having representations of business rules is then invoked, and input from the input forms and output forms is then linked to dynamic variables within the decision-tree based map. See Gleason, par. [0003]. The cited portions of Gleason disclose that a process engine is run on an application server and that the process engine is responsible for executing the work flow process. The cited portions of Gleason further disclose that the process engine “provides a process designer that handles generation and editing of business processes and process rulesets.” See Gleason, para. [0082]. However, a thorough reading of Gleason shows that the rules engine is not integrated with the work flow processor in the process engine 18, but is included in the business objects 38. For example, Gleason discloses that “[t]he business objects 38 include process rules, a process rules engine, data manager and plug-ins, application context, process agent worker and report objects.” See Gleason, para. [0059]. Therefore, Gleason merely describes the type of work flow processor/process rules engine

interface as described as prior art in the present application. Gleason fails to disclose or suggest that the rules engine and the workflow processor are implemented in the same processor, as recited in claim 1. Thus, the cited portions of Gleason fail to disclose or suggest at least one feature of claim 1.

Additionally, the cited portions of Gleason fail to disclose or suggest changing the business rules and applying the changed business rules during execution of the workflow without stopping execution of the workflow, as recited in claim 1.

More specifically, Gleason discloses that the individual rules and rulesets are configurable through the use of variables assigned and generated within a desktop interface. However, a thorough reading of Gleason makes clear that this refers to the building of a business application and not to applying changes to business rules during execution of the workflow. Moreover, Gleason fails to disclose or suggest that the changed business rules are applied during execution of the workflow without stopping execution of the workflow, as recited in claim 1. Thus, the cited portions of Gleason fail to disclose or suggest this additional feature of claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable for at least the reasons noted above.

Claims 2-5 and 7 depend from claim 1, which Applicants have shown to be allowable. Accordingly, claims 2-5 and 7 are also allowable, at least by virtue of their dependence from claim 1.

The subject matter of claim 1 discussed above is similarly recited in independent claim 16. Therefore, claim 16 is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claims 17 - 20 depend from claim 16, which Applicants have shown to be allowable. Accordingly, claims 17 - 20 are also allowable, at least by virtue of their dependence from claim 16.

In addition, dependent claims 4 and 18 recite additional features that are not disclosed by the cited portions of Gleason. For example, the cited portions of Gleason fail to disclose or suggest constructing a delayed query to evaluate at least one of the business rules, the query delayed in the workflow process such that the query is executed over a data set smaller than a full sized data set whereby a time-efficient query results. For at least this additional reason, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4 and 18 are allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-5, 7 and 16-20 patentably define over Gleason. Applicants respectfully request, therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5, 7 and 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C § 103

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gleason in view of “An operational approach to the design of workflow systems” (“Agarwal”). Claim 6 depends from claim 1, which Applicants have shown to be allowable. Accordingly, claim 6 is also allowable, at least by virtue of its dependence from claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 patentably defines over Gleason and Agarwal. Applicants respectfully request, therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are allowable and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested. In the event that the Examiner cannot allow the present application for any reason, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney, Bryan T. Giles, at (215) 564-8954 to discuss the resolution of any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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